Nova Scotia

ANNUAL REPORT

*for the fiscal years*
*1998 – 2000*

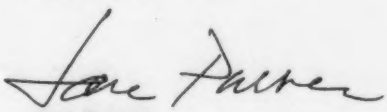
# Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The Honourable Myra Freeman
Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia

Madam:

I have the honour to submit the report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the period April 1, 1998, to March 31, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Purves
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the Status
of Women Act

102-02532/

The Honourable Jane Purves
Minister in Charge of Administration
of the Advisory Council on the
Status of Women Act

Madam:

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am pleased to present you with our report covering the period April 1, 1998, to March 31, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

P Doyle Bedwell

Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, LL.B.
Chair

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The merging of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women with the Women's Directorate in 1996 strengthened the voice of council and enabled our work to become more focused and strategic.

Council's goal of inclusion is facilitated by the wonderful women who make up the council. Council brings together the experiences of women of various backgrounds: women with disabilities, women who are black, lesbian, native, or single parents, and women from rural communities—women who can shape our direction as we strive to achieve equality, fairness, and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia. During 1998–1999 and 1999–2000, council continued to act on its commitment to be inclusive as it deals with numerous issues affecting women in its programs and advice to government.

As a Mi'kmaq woman and a woman who has been a single parent, I am particularly aware of the need to include diversity issues in all of council's work. As Chair, I often have the privilege and responsibility to represent council at public events or to be the council spokesperson on issues. On many of these occasions, I am able to draw on my own background and experience as I speak to the issues.

Another of my responsibilities as Chair is to ensure that the council's mandate and priorities are reflected in the programs and activities of the agency.

A major priority for 1998–1999 was the development of two projects aimed at young women: *Young Women: Raising Voices, Channeling Energies* focused on issues related to well-being and personal safety in the lives of young women; *Hopes Dreams and Directions* paid additional attention to the employment and career aspirations of young women. These events, along with our support for *Take Our Daughters to Work Day* in April, and the celebration of the accomplishments of four young women from the Strait Area electric car racing team at our annual meeting, meant that 1998–99 was an exciting and successful year of programs and events focused on young women with significant involvement of African-Canadian, aboriginal, and disabled young women. In 1999–2000 we continued to work on issues that affect young women through our involvement in the National Council of Women's project *Making Connections: Young Women as Victims and Perpetrators of Violence*.

Highlights during 1999–2000 included significant participation by council in *Made to Measure*, a conference focusing on gender-based analysis in the field of women's health and a series of activities council organized for International Women's Week on valuing women's unpaid caregiving work. This included a lively public forum entitled *'A Woman's Work is Never Done'~ Can Policy Value Caregiving?*, the proceeds of which were in great demand.

Another challenge over the past several years was to bring more attention to issues affecting women's access to employment opportunities in non-traditional fields like science and technology, as well as the growing information technology and oil and gas industries in Nova Scotia. Our continued association with the Association of Nova Scotia Women in Education and Research in Science (ANSWERS) and with Women in Trades and Technology Nova Scotia (WITTNS) enabled us to address some of the barriers and obstacles women continue to experience in these fields.

If we are to make any gains for women, we must continue to build similar partnerships and alliances with new and existing women's groups and organizations that share our goals.

This year was also a busy one as we continued to provide input and advice to both federal and provincial governments on changes in legislation and programs affecting women.

During 1998–99, council wrote five briefs and made submissions on such issues as child custody and access reform, restructuring of the Nova Scotia social assistance system, and student loans and access to post-secondary education, to name a few. In 1999–2000, we made submissions to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance and to the Government of Nova Scotia on student assistance and on pension reform. Backed by research and written documentation, council's participation in these consultation processes has allowed me to bring forward women's equality issues in important and sometimes highly controversial areas of legislative reform.

As our mandate requires, council continues to represent as fully as possible the concerns and aspirations of equality-seeking women in Nova Scotia and we look forward to continuing our work as we enter the new millennium.

Patricia Doyle-Bedwell
Chairperson

## BACKGROUND

In April 1975, the Government of Nova Scotia appointed a seven-member Task Force on the Status of Women and instructed them to study the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) with particular reference to those recommendations within provincial jurisdiction; report to the government on the status of women in the province; and recommend to government actions necessary to improve the status of women in Nova Scotia. This report is summed up in the publication entitled *Herself/Elle-Même* (1976).

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1977 to advise the provincial government on issues of interest and concern to women and to bring those issues forward.

In 1996, the Women's Directorate merged with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, strengthening organizational capacity in policy and research, information and education, community development, and rural outreach.

The mandate of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women is defined by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act, which was first passed in 1977. The mandate and powers of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women are set out in Section 4 of the Act:

- to advise the Minister upon such matters relating to the status of women as are referred to the council for consideration by the Minister
- to bring to the attention of the Minister matters of interest and concern to women

The council has power to:

- receive and hear petitions and suggestions concerning the status of women
- undertake and recommend research on matters relevant to the status of women
- recommend and participate in programs concerning the status of women
- propose legislation, policies, and practices to promote equality of opportunity and status
- publish reports, studies, and recommendations

The council works to make sure that issues affecting the lives of Nova Scotia women become part of the government's plan. Our concerns touch all areas of women's lives, including paid and unpaid work, family life, health, education, legal rights, and experiences of discrimination and violence.

Council members come from across Nova Scotia and have been chosen for their interest and involvement in women's issues in their communities. Council meets up to five times a year. The Chair of the council is elected annually by council members. The Chair acts as the spokesperson for the council and reports to the Minister Responsible for the Administration of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act.

During 1999–2000, council had a staff of seven in the Halifax office and three part-time field workers in other areas of the province. Staff provide administrative support for the work of council, information and communication services, rural outreach, and community liaison. Staff also maintain a resource library and field numerous requests for information and assistance on status of women issues from individuals, community groups, and government agencies.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Biographical information is current for the reporting period.

### CAPE BRETON REGION

**Patricia LeBlanc** (1999–2000) is a resident of Sydney with extensive community involvement. As a woman with disabilities, she has been active in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. Ms. LeBlanc has served on the board of Community Involvement of the Disabled holding various executive positions on the board over the years. She has also served on the board of the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities. She initiated the start-up of the ACE Bowling League, the first bowling league for persons with cross-disabilities. Ms. LeBlanc represented post-secondary Nova Scotian students with disabilities on the board of directors of the National Education Association of Disabled Students from 1990–94 and also served a two-year term on the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1996–98 (Patricia Flynn). Over the years, she has worked as a bookkeeper, researcher, office supervisor, and enforcement officer and case aide. Ms. LeBlanc is working on a bachelor of business administration from the University College of Cape Breton.

**Mary Sampson** (1999–2000) of Sydney joined the paid workforce as an instructor at the adult vocational training centre in Sydney after a 23-year career in homemaking and childcare. She later became a ward clerk at the Northside General Hospital, a position she held for 15 years. Ms. Sampson is a volunteer member of the Cape Breton Island Housing Board, which oversees the placement of applicants, the removal of clients, and the upkeep of housing units. She is also a skilled and experienced public speaker.

**Marcie Shwery-Stanley** (1998–99) of Sydney is a communications officer with Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. She chaired the Task Force on the Economic Integration of Women with Disabilities in Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Partnership Committee on Entrepreneurship and Persons With Disabilities, and co-chaired the Industrial Cape Breton Disabled Persons Employment Committee. Ms. Shwery-Stanley is actively

involved in the organization of Women in Business Conferences held in Cape Breton and was named 1993 Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Women's Club of Sydney. She is a former member of the Sydney Human Rights Affirmative Action Committee and past president of Community Involvement of the Disabled Society. Ms. Shwery-Stanley also represented the Cape Breton Region on the Advisory Council from 1994–98.

**Sharon Sobol** (1999–2000) is a native of Sydney. She holds a bachelor of science in pharmacy from Dalhousie University and a health services management designation from the Canadian Hospital Association, and is working on a master's degree in health service administration from the Canadian School of Management in affiliation with Hawthorn University. She has been the manager of Pharmacy Services at the Cape Breton Healthcare Complex since 1997 and previously held other pharmacist positions with the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. Ms. Sobol has had extensive teaching experience and is the author of a number of teaching publications. She is a member of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, serving as president of the Cape Breton chapter from 1989–91. She has served on a number of committees within her professional associations and serves on a variety of hospital committees.

**Rita Warner** (1999–2000) is a resident of Cape Breton with extensive career experience and community involvement. For the last 25 years she has held a variety of short-term contract positions with such organizations as Inverness County Recreation & Tourism, Statistics Canada, MacDonald Hall in Inverness, and the Women Aware Women's Centre in Port Hawkesbury. Ms. Warner is skilled in program design and administration, project and group facilitation, and promotions. She has been an active volunteer for a myriad of community organizations including Women Aware, the women's reference group to the Labour Force Development Board, Violence Against Women, Inverness County Literacy Board, the Purple Ribbon Campaign, and the Nova Scotia Tourism Association.

**CENTRAL REGION**

**Elizabeth Blanchette**(1998–99) is an electronic engineer. The reality of working in a male-dominated profession has motivated her to become involved in women's issues. She is a past member of Women in Science and Engineering, the Regional Women's Advisory Council for the Coast Guard, and co-chaired the board for Alice Housing. Her primary interests are in breaking the isolation for women in non-traditional jobs and in advancing women in technology. Ms. Blanchette also represented the Central Region from 1996–98.

**Patricia Doyle-Bedwell** (1998–99, 1999–2000) is a Mi'kmaq woman, a mother, a teacher, and a student. In 1993, she graduated from Dalhousie Law School as one of the first of five Mi'kmaq women to do so. In the past, she has worked in the areas of child welfare law and policy, land claims, and the criminal justice system. Main areas of interest are issues relating to aboriginal women. Professor Doyle-Bedwell is currently director of the Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University. Previously, she was an assistant professor of law at Dalhousie University and the acting director of the Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Program. She is a Justice Commissioner of the Mi'kmaq Justice Institute. She has represented the Central Region since 1994 and was elected Chair of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1996, a position to which she was re-elected by council members in 1997 and 1998.

**FUNDY REGION**

**Jean Knockwood** (1998–99) lives in Shubenacadie. She holds a master's degree in public administration. For nine years, she was a native education counsellor at Dalhousie University, actively recruiting members of the native community to enroll in programs offered by the university. She was vice-president of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians and sat on the Board of Governors at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is school manager of the Indian Brook School. She represented the Fundy Region from 1996–98.

**Colleen O'Connor** (1998–99) is from Truro. While attending university, she worked summers as a parole officer for Correctional Services, and now works for Access Nova Scotia in their Truro office. As well, she has been a facilitator for race relations and employment equity training within the civil service. Ms. O'Connor also represented the Fundy Region from 1996–98.

**Sonja Power** is a resident of Amherst and is a recent graduate of Memorial University, Newfoundland, with a bachelor of arts in social sciences. She is working on a criminology and business administration certificate, also from Memorial. Ms. Power has extensive volunteer experience in the corrections and victim support areas. She volunteers for the Newfoundland Society at Springhill Institution and is a leisure support volunteer in the maximum-security women's unit at Springhill. She is also a trained volunteer for the Victim Support Framework Project in Amherst, providing emotional support for victims of family violence and promoting zero tolerance for family violence. Ms. Power has held a number of term positions over the last few years as a counsellor, outreach coordinator, and project assistant with organizations of particular interest to women.

**HIGHLAND REGION**

**Doreen Paris** (1999) of New Glasgow was employed with the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University. She is active in the Pictou County Women's Centre, and past president of Tearmann Society for Battered Women. She was provincial president of the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute, and received certification as a black legal advocate. Doreen's contributions to her community have been recognized by the New Glasgow Volunteer of the Year Award and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. Ms. Paris also represented the Highland Region from 1994–98.

**SOUTH SHORE REGION**

**Dianne Crowell** (1999) of Glenwood, Yarmouth County, operates a fish-processing business and was recognized as the Atlantic Canada Woman Entrepreneur of the Year in 1992. She has served on the boards of the Women's Health Education Network, the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia, and the Association of Atlantic Women Business Owners, and is a co-founder of the Jane Hurshman Memorial Fund. Ms. Crowell also represented the South Shore Region from 1994–98.

**Karen Field** (1999–2000) of Bridgewater has been a physiotherapist for more than 30 years, having received a diploma in physiotherapy from Dalhousie University in 1967. She has held a number of positions at hospitals in Cape Breton and on the South Shore. She was the director of physiotherapy at Dawson Memorial Hospital/South Shore Regional Hospital in Bridgewater from 1977–93. Since then, she has been with the Physiotherapy Health Services Association of South Shore. Ms. Field has demonstrated leadership in her profession over the years, having held a number of executive positions with her professional associations. She has also been an active volunteer in her community. Ms. Field also represented the South Shore Region from 1996–98.

**VALLEY REGION**

**Shirley E. Jackson** (1999–2000) of Inglewood is a married mother of four who works outside the home. She is very active in her community as a member of the Inglewood Community Club, the Inglewood Education Committee, and the Family & Children's Services of Annapolis County. She is the secretary for Annapolis to Kingston Black Community Development, a volunteer canvasser for various charities, and a volunteer typist for various community groups. Ms. Jackson has also served as secretary for both the Western Regional Alliance of Black Communities and for the Black United Front Council. Ms. Jackson has been working to save an orphaned and seemingly forgotten black cemetery outside the Annapolis Royal area.

**Darlene Lawrence** (1999) of Bear River, Digby County, is coordinator of the Digby County Family Resource Centre. She is a board member of the Digby-Clare Business Development Centre and a school council member. She was a counsellor and board member of Interval House in Ottawa and a volunteer at Adsum House in Halifax, both emergency shelters for women and children. Ms. Lawrence also represented the Valley Region from 1994–98.

## MISSION, GOALS, AND CORE FUNCTIONS

### OUR MISSION

To advance equality, fairness, and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia.

### OUR GOALS

- To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status.
- To advise government on ways in which legislation, government policies, and programs can advance equality for women in Nova Scotia.
- To promote women's economic equality.
- To reduce violence against women in communities, workplaces, and families.
- To improve the health and well-being of women and their families.

### OUR CORE FUNCTIONS

**Research and Policy Development**

The council advises the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women on the concerns and priorities of women, and formulates strategies and options to address these. The council conducts quantitative and qualitative research in consultation with community groups and government departments to ensure that its advice is a feasible, relevant, timely, and accurate guide to government action.

**Information and Communication Services**

The council collects and disseminates information on women's issues to the Minister, council, staff, and other key stakeholders, including the media and the public. Through a comprehensive communications strategy, council informs and influences key stakeholders about issues and concerns affecting women, council, and government priorities, activities, and accomplishments. Council also looks for ways to improve how women's issues are addressed.

**Rural Outreach and Community Liaison**

Through council members and fieldwork staff, the council brings forward concerns of women from across Nova Scotia, with particular attention to historically disadvantaged groups. Council also partners with communities, organizations, and agencies to advance equality for women in programs and services.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Goal: Participation and Inclusion

Council works to increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities. It puts particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status.

#### 1998–99

Council continued to ensure that events, consultations, and initiatives were inclusive of women's diversity.

Council continued follow up of the *Hopes, Dreams and Directions* forum for young high-school age women held in metro in 1997–98 by conducting forums in four other locations in the province: Amherst, Truro, Digby, and Sydney. These were very well received by youth and educators alike. To facilitate future plans to deliver the forum in Acadian communities in partnership with the Federation des Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the text of the Irondale Theatre production has been translated into French.

As part of the follow-up to *Hopes, Dreams and Directions*, council launched a writing contest on gender issues for young women in grades ten to twelve. Female high school students across Nova Scotia were asked to submit a story, poem, or article about their vision of equality and how it can be achieved. One hundred and nineteen entries were received. Entries reflected the complex gender issues young women deal with in their day-to-day lives. Judges had a difficult time selecting the best of the many outstanding entries, but Daphne Keevil Harrold, Carlie Stevens, and Christy Sutherland placed first, second, and third, respectively. The contest was motivated by a need to reach young Nova Scotian women about issues surrounding women's equality.

Council continued to support the Chair, Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, in reaching out to women in the Mi'kmaq community and in her particular interest in advancing issues affecting aboriginal women.

In partnership with Dr. Evi Tastsoglou of Saint Mary's University, council hosted an information and feedback session on issues affecting immigrant women arising out of research conducted by Dr. Tastsoglou.

The council supported and participated in the *Women Leading Change Conference* organized by the Girl Guides of Nova Scotia with both the Chair and acting executive director making presentations to Girl Guide leaders from around the province.

In collaboration with researchers connected to the Maritime Centre of Excellence on Women's Health, council staff participated in a research project to develop guiding principles for the work of the Centre.

Council's fieldworker in Amherst initiated a community women's history project which was very well received by all sections of the community, and which has led to an ongoing mural project.

**1999–2000**

Council assisted researchers Dr. Leonard Preyra (Saint Mary's University) and Dr. Cynthia Alexander (Acadia University) to develop a project called *Democracy Bytes Back* to build communication and information technology capacity among and between women's groups.

The council assisted Dalhousie researcher Dr. Louise Carbert to organize focus groups for her research to identify barriers and opportunities for greater political participation by rural women.

Council advised and worked with several groups involved in promoting women's participation in science and technology and organized a meeting to exchange information on proposed projects and to pool ideas on the issues.

The council Chair, Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, sat on the Mi'kmaq Education Council and the Race Relations Committee of the Nova Scotia Barristers Society, and worked on behalf of the Native Women's Association in meetings with government on treaty-related issues.

Through the fieldwork program, council continued to support the development of a mural in Amherst as part of a continuing women's history project.

Council staff participated in a cross-departmental, intergovernmental committee to discuss the development of a sustainable communities initiative in Nova Scotia in order to ensure women's participation and inclusion.

Council staff participated in discussions with the Department of Community Services and women's centres to discuss challenges related to sustainable funding and to develop new ideas and funding strategies in a period of fiscal restraint.

The acting executive director of council, Brigitte Neumann, participated in a consultation of the Task Force on an Inclusive Public Service organized by Treasury Board Canada.

**Goal: Advice to Government**

Council advises government on ways in which legislation, government policies, and programs can advance equality for women in Nova Scotia.

**1998–99**

The council submitted a brief to the Special Joint Senate-Commons Committee on Child Custody and Access Reform under the federal Divorce Act. In the context of various proposals for reform, the brief flagged several important issues for divorcing or separating mothers, especially for those who were in abusive relationships. In response to the report of the Joint Committee which was published in December, council sponsored a joint press conference with the other advisory councils of the Atlantic provinces, advocating that the federal Department of Justice produce more pertinent research and exercise extreme caution on any proposed reforms, particularly with respect to matters such as "compulsory mediation."

Council submitted an extensive brief to the Department of Community Services on the restructuring of social assistance, focusing on ways to improve services to better facilitate a transition from social assistance to employment for single parents. The background research incorporated issues identified in eight workshops held by the field workers in different parts of the province.

The council coordinated a seminar co-sponsored by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, the Family Violence Prevention Initiative, and council to develop a response to the federal Department of Justice consultation paper on the defenses of self-defence, provocation, and defence of property.

With assistance from the Nova Scotia Department of Finance, council provided the Minister with a gender analysis of the federal proposals to incorporate the current Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) into a Seniors' Benefit and to base this on family income. The analysis demonstrated the negative impact these proposals would have on many Nova Scotian women. The proposals for a Seniors' Benefit were later withdrawn by the federal government.

Council submitted a brief and the Chair participated in a public consultation meeting in response to the Education Minister's consultation paper on Public Expectations of Post-Secondary Education.

Council staff participated in a creativity focus group, sponsored by Correctional Services of Canada, to provide input on action to address, review, and analyze support for women who had been unable to function in the new correctional centres. Among the many difficulties identified, foetal alcohol syndrome featured prominently.

**1999–2000**

The council Chair presented a brief to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance during its annual federal budget consultations in Halifax.

Council prepared a formal response to the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture's discussion paper *Student Assistance in the New Millennium*.

Council staff initiated discussion of the purpose and benefits of conducting gender-based analysis of government initiatives through a presentation to deputy ministers and a consultation and workshop with the policy planning staff from various government departments.

Council maintained contact with a variety of community groups interested in governmental policy initiatives. This included partnering the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW-Nova Scotia) in meetings with women's groups to assess progress since the first United

Nations' World Conference on the Status of Women (in 1975), and to identify issues to raise at the Special General Assembly.

Council Chair Patricia Doyle-Bedwell was selected by a national committee to participate in a UN preparatory conference in Geneva for the United Nations' Council Special General Assembly on the Status of Women in New York in June 2000.

**Goal: Economic Equality**

Council works to promote women's economic equality.

**1998–99**

Council continued to focus attention on promoting women's access to non-traditional employment, including women in community economic development initiatives, and creating opportunities for young women.

Council provided input and advice to the newly-formed Labour Market Development Secretariat relating to women's access to non-traditional employment opportunities, labour market training, and opportunities for life-long learning, and women's inclusion in community economic development processes in Nova Scotia.

The Chair and council staff responded to an invitation to provide input into the strategic plan for the Nova Scotia Community College and drew attention to the need to increase women's participation in training for various kinds of technologies and trades.

Council staff facilitated discussion among employers and unions in the longshore industry about their obligations to hire women and people from other under-represented groups under the federal employment equity legislation. This led to a process whereby the employers and the unions worked with an expert in the field to identify barriers and develop a plan to address them. The process also opened the way for an ongoing relationship with Women in Trades and Technology Nova Scotia (WITTNS) seeking further opportunities to advance women in technical careers.

The council continued to support and advise the Association of Nova Scotia Women in Education and Research in Science. Council brought in the keynote speaker Dr. Lillian Dyck for a one-day forum, *Finding Answers*,

about the dilemmas facing women in science, engineering, and technology throughout their careers. The forum coincided with Science and Technology Week in September. Dr. Dyck, a Cree woman, also made herself available to meet with the Chair and local Mi'kmaq youth in the Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University.

Building on the success of the *Counting Women In* project initiated in 1997–98, council continued to support the newly-formed Women for Economic Equality Society to develop a proposal for a Women's Community Economic Development Network in Nova Scotia. The project received initial funding to operate in three counties in Nova Scotia.

Council continued its outreach and support to expand economic opportunities for young women.

Council again provided information to support the annual *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*. The objective of this program is to raise public awareness and to expose girls to a variety of career possibilities. The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women has championed this program over a number of years to develop new horizons for Nova Scotia girls. Promotional efforts specifically targeted at employers are well established and resulted in good participation again this year.

At its annual general meeting on May 28, council honoured the Strait Area Education Resource Centre (SAERC) Highland Thunder Girls Electric Car Racing Team for making a significant contribution to women in science and other non-traditional fields. The team members from Port Hawkesbury were only fourteen years old when they built themselves an electric race car virtually from scratch. Three years later, they won the North American electric race car championship in Phoenix, Arizona, successfully defeating teams from leading engineering schools across North America.

In the fall, a report on the value of unpaid housework and childcare was released by GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research society dedicated to creating a genuine progress index for Nova Scotia. The council partnered with GPI in the release of the document and assisted with communications planning for the release, which generated positive media attention. The council made plans to follow up with a forum on unpaid work and care-giving in 1999–2000.

**1999-2000**

Council continued to support the Women's Community Economic Development Network and to participate in the Interdepartmental Committee on Community Economic Development.

Council worked with Women in Trades and Technology Nova Scotia (WITTNS) to promote the participation of women in the off-shore energy sector and to draw government attention to the desirability of including women in training and employment initiatives.

During International Women's Week in March, council sponsored a public lecture by Judy Rebick entitled *Transforming the Value of Work: Next Steps to Women's Equality*, as well as a policy forum on unpaid care-giving entitled *'A Woman's Work is Never Done'~Can Policy Value Caregiving?* The forum was very well received by those who attended and the proceedings were subsequently published in a popular format and distributed to participants and interested members of the public.

Council continued to liaise with and support the Association of Nova Scotia Women for Education and Research in Science (ANSWERS), Women in Trades and Technology Nova Scotia (WITTNS), Women in Information Technology (WinIT), Techsploration, and the Hypatia Project in their various projects to increase Nova Scotian women's participation in science and technology careers.

In the fall of 1999, council participated in the Women in Business Conference in Sydney, Cape Breton.

The Chair continued to draw attention to the need for extended maternity leave through interviews with the media.

**Goal: Reducing Violence Against Women**

Council works to reduce violence against women in communities, workplaces, and families.

**1998-99**

Council maintained its involvement in the Coalition Against Sexual Harassment in Schools (CASH). CASH represented a variety of stakeholders committed to the goal of eliminating sexual and other forms of harassment in our schools. This year, the committee developed some educational tools

for use in the schools: *Tips for Teachers*, an information package about harassment to support teachers' professional development; *Tips for Students*, an information package about harassment to be part of students' orientation kits; and a questionnaire about sexual harassment to be used as an icebreaker for students and teachers.

Council member Doreen Paris of the African United Baptist Association's Women's Institute (AUBAWI) was instrumental in the development of a project to address violence, focusing on the black community through workshops and a video entitled *No More Secrets*. Council supported the AUBAWI in the development of this project.

Council continued to meet demands from individuals and agencies for copies of *Making Changes: A Book for Women in Abusive Relationships*. Council also continued its support for and involvement in the Family Violence Prevention Initiative and partnered with them to initiate training for emergency health services staff on effective responses to woman abuse. Council once again coordinated the flag-lowering ceremony for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6.

Council staff participated on a Department of Justice Committee to design an evaluation framework and strategy for the new Supreme Court Family Division to ensure that due consideration was given to issues related to gender fairness and adequate protection for victims of family violence or abuse.

**1999–2000**

Council Chair Patricia Doyle-Bedwell continued to address various issues related to violence and abuse in the media and met with the Halifax chief of police to discuss a number of related issues.

Council partnered with L'Association des Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse to produce a peer education program called *Moi, Je M'Affirme*. The program trains senior women to deliver workshops for the prevention of elder abuse.

Staff supported and liaised with the National Council of Women on their *Making Connections: Young Women as Victims and Perpetrators of Violence* project. Brigitte Neumann, acting executive director of council, and Ali Marsman, a young woman from Halifax, participated in a Winnipeg conference on this topic.

Council staff assisted the Department of Justice in developing screening protocols and procedures for mediators and court staff involved in the new Supreme Court Family Division. The purpose of the screening tools is to prevent inappropriate use of mediation in situations where there had been abuse or violence. Council staff also participated in an ongoing committee to evaluate the new Supreme Court Family Division.

Council was involved in ongoing consultations with women's groups and with the Department of Justice in the areas of conditional sentencing and restorative justice, to ensure that the processes are not misused and that they do not re-victimize women.

Council partnered with students from DalTech to develop a poster to mark the tenth anniversary of the Montreal massacre and, through the fieldwork program, took part in planning activities and events in the province to mark December 6 and Family Violence Prevention Week.

In association with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, council assisted in the development of Community Advocates for Rights with Responsibility (CARR), to raise awareness about media representations promoting sexist and racist representations of girls, women, and African Canadians and other people of colour. In this connection, council referred sexist or racist literature to the Advertising Standards Council of Canada and also participated in planning the March 2000 conference entitled *Hate: Poisoning Youth—A Conference on hate activities, literature and marketing to youth*. Council Chair Patricia Doyle-Bedwell was a panelist at this conference.

**Goal: Improved Health and Well-Being**

Council works to improve the health and well-being of women and their families.

**1998–1999**

In February, council organized *Young Women: Raising Voices, Channeling Energies* in partnership with the IWK Grace Health Centre. This was an exciting and informative three-part educational and professional development conference for and about young women and those who support them. With the combined support of the council, the Halifax Regional School Board (Community Collaborations & Partnerships), and the IWK Grace Health Centre, the conference included three related events: a "speak out" and festival for young women; a conference for helping professionals; and a public lecture for parents and teachers. Over one

hundred and twenty people from the helping and teaching professions and young women themselves enjoyed three days filled with education, energy, and hope for young women's futures.

Following up on Council's participation and support for *Just Loosen Up and Start Talking!* between 1996 and 1998, council was invited to participate in the newly-formed Round Table on Youth Sexual Health led by the Department of Health. The Round Table produced a follow-up community education tool, *Just Loosen Up and Keep Talking!*, to encourage the participation of youth and adults in the promotion of youth sexual health. Fieldwork staff were encouraged to use and promote this in their communities.

Council fieldworkers also continued to be involved in the planning and delivery of well women clinics in Sydney, Truro, and Digby.

**1999–2000**

Council contributed to an international conference on gender-based analysis, *Made to Measure*, focusing on women's health. The conference was organized by the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. Patricia Doyle-Bedwell was a keynote speaker and staff were involved in leading two sessions at the conference.

Council continued to collaborate with the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health in a number of other initiatives including a project on body image and healthy eating, and the development of a joint research proposal on unpaid caregiving and stress.

Council staff contributed to a consultation on reproductive and genetic technologies for Health Canada.

Council staff continued to participate in the Round Table on Youth Sexual Health and assisted in the development of *Just Loosen Up and Keep Talking!*, a workshop guide to encourage youth and community involvement in the promotion of youth sexual health.

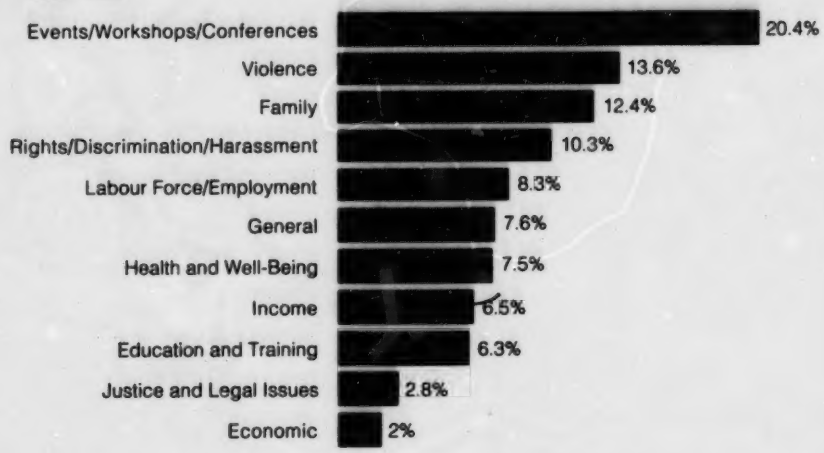
Field staff continued to support well women clinics in different regions of the province.

The Chair continued to participate in a research project on the health needs of aboriginal women.

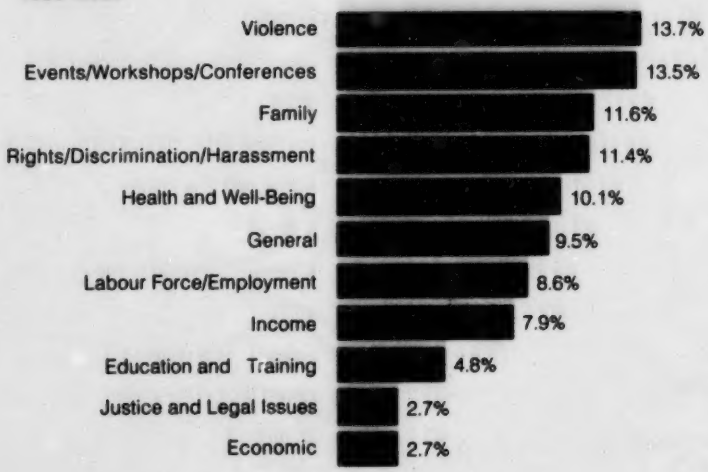
## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE, AND ASSISTANCE

### SUBJECT AREA OF REQUESTS MADE TO NSACSW,

**1998–1999**




**1999–2000**



## PUBLICATIONS

In addition to its regular newsletter, fact sheets, and handouts, council published the following documents during the reporting period:

**May 1998**
A Brief to the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access Reform.

**July 1998**
*Summary of Programs and Activities in 1997–1998.*

**August 1998**
*A Brief to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance.*

**September 1998**
*Response to a Consultation Document on Public Expectations of Post-Secondary Education in Canada.*

**September 30, 1998**
*Response to Department of Justice Consultation Paper on Provocation, Self-Defence, and Defence of Property.*

**December 1998**
*Plan of Action 1998–99.*

**January 1999**
*Rebuilding the System: Response to the Department of Community Services' Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative.*

**February 1999**
*Comments on a Discussion Paper Regarding Nova Scotia Pension Benefits Act and Regulations.*

**April 1999**
*Student Assistance in the New Millenium: Response to the NS Department of Education and Culture Discussion Paper.*

**September 1999**
*Brief to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance.*

**March 2000**
*'A Woman's Work is Never Done'~Can Policy Value Caregiving?.*

**April 2000**
*Highlights of Council's Year, 1999–2000.*

**July 2000**
*Including Women: Comments on Towards Prosperity—A Discussion Paper on Developing an Economic Growth Strategy for Nova Scotia.*

**July 2000**
*Annual Report for the Fiscal Years 1994–1998.*

**August 2000**
*Recommendations for Revision of the Nova Scotia Police Act.*

In addition to the publications listed above, council published the following fact sheets during the reporting period:

**March 2000**
*Unpaid Work: Some Selected Statistics.*

**August 2000**
*Foremothers in Equality: Some Early Nova Scotia Suffragists.*

**October 2000**
*Making History, Building Futures: Quiz for Women's History Month.*

**March 2000 and December 2000**
*Newsletter, Women's Writes.*